

Washington State Department of Transportation - News

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Amtrak *Cascades* ridership sets all-time record in 2007 Highest increase in ridership since service began; trend continues into 2008

OLYMPIA – Amtrak *Cascades* ridership in 2007 increased to 676,670—a 7.4 percent increase over 2006 and the highest annual ridership total since the inception of Amtrak *Cascades* service.

More convenient schedules and better connections, along with rising fuel prices for motorists influenced ridership growth. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) expects ridership to continue to increase with the extension of the current Portland-Seattle-Bellingham service to Vancouver, B.C in mid-2008.

“We are very pleased with the growth of the Amtrak *Cascades* service and the significant milestone that we have reached,” said Ken Uznanski, WSDOT Rail Passenger Manager. “The trend is continuing into 2008 with both January and February ridership up over 13 percent compared to 2007 - the highest ridership totals for these months in the history of the service.”

Additionally, Amtrak and WSDOT have partnered to complete a major interior renovation on all coach and business class cars used on Amtrak *Cascades*. The \$10 million project began summer 2007 and the first completed cars will go into service spring 2008.

Amtrak *Cascades* consists of four daily round-trips between Portland and Seattle, with service between Bellingham and Portland, via Seattle; between Eugene and Seattle, via Portland; and between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. Amtrak *Cascades* is operated by Amtrak under contracts with the Washington and Oregon Departments of Transportation. For Amtrak *Cascades* fares and schedules, visit www.amtrakcascades.com.

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Drivers can now get real time traffic and weather information by dialing 5-1-1 from most phones. This new traveler information system builds upon the highly successful Washington State Highway hotline that managed 4.6 million calls each year. Callers can also use 5-1-1 to get statewide construction, mountain pass condition, and state ferry system information, as well as toll free numbers for passenger rail and airlines. TTY users can call 1-800-833-6388.